

Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River

Summary of Preliminary Alternative Concepts



Forest Service

**Coconino and Tonto
National Forests**

**Red Rock & Payson
Ranger Districts**

November 2016

Commenting on the Preliminary Alternative Concepts

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Fossil Creek Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) printed in the *Federal Register* on Nov. 29, 2016. Publication of this NOI begins a 45-day public comment period. Please submit comments by Jan. 13, 2017. Please know that if you commented on the CRMP during previous designated comment periods, those comments are part of the project record and need not be re-submitted now.

Submit Comments: Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of commenters, are part of the public record. Please submit comments in writing through one of several methods.

- E-mail to comments-southwestern-coconino-redrock@fs.fed.us (include “Fossil Creek CRMP” in the subject line).
- Mail to Coconino National Forest, Attention: Fossil Creek CRMP, P.O. Box 20429, Sedona, AZ 86341.
- Fax to (928) 203-7539.
- Provide in person at the Red Rock Ranger District Office, 8375 State Route 179, Sedona, AZ 86351.

Attend a Public Event: Learn more about the proposed action at several public engagement opportunities, including an informative Dec. 6 “phone conference” you can do right from your home.

- **Dec. 6, 2016 • 5:30-6:30 p.m. • Dial: 1-888-844-9904, then enter Access Code: 6560414#** During this phone call, we will discuss the CRMP’s proposed action. Email questions in advance to comments-southwestern-coconino-redrock@fs.fed.us. This broadcast-style call, with one-way audio, will be recorded for those who cannot listen to the live call.
- **Jan. 5, 2017 • 5:30-7 p.m. Open House • Payson Unified School District Board Room, south entrance,** 902 W. Main Street, Payson, AZ.
- **Jan. 9, 2017 • 5:30-7 p.m. Open House • Camp Verde Library, east entrance,** 130 Black Bridge Road, Camp Verde, AZ.

Contacts: Visit the Fossil Creek CRMP webpage at <http://tinyurl.com/FossilCreekCRMP> for more, or contact Marcos Roybal, project coordinator, at maroybal@fs.fed.us or (928) 203-2915.

USDA Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

[DR 4300.003 USDA Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy \(June 2, 2015\)](#)

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Introduction

The Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River was designated by Congress in 2009. In response to this designation, the Forest Service must establish a Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) to guide management of the 17-mile river corridor and protect or enhance the outstandingly remarkable values identified. The purpose of this document is to share and solicit feedback on the range of preliminary alternative concepts (referred to from here on as alternatives) developed for the Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River (CRMP) located within the Coconino and Tonto national forests. These alternatives, which are the result of several years of public and partner engagement, build on the successes of several interim management measures within the recreation-themed Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River corridor.

At this stage, the environmental analysis required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Fossil Creek CRMP is being elevated from an Environmental Assessment (EA) to a more detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in order to more fully analyze potential effects. This change necessitates publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register*. In the case of Fossil Creek, publication of the NOI begins a 45-day public comment period on the alternative concepts presented in this document. (For details, visit the Fossil Creek CRMP webpage at <http://tinyurl.com/FossilCreekCRMP>.) Comments received will help the Forest Service refine the range of alternatives, which the agency will analyze in the EIS. Additional opportunities for public comment will be provided once a draft EIS (DEIS) is released, most likely in mid- to late 2017.

If you previously commented, please know that comments received during all designated comment periods on the Fossil Creek CRMP are providing an important foundation for these alternatives and need not be resubmitted during this 45-day scoping period.

Location

The Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River (WSR) is located within the administrative boundaries of the Coconino and Tonto national forests (NFs) in central Arizona (figure 1). On the Coconino NF, the WSR is accessed from State Highway 260 on Forest Road (FR) 708, approximately five miles east of Camp Verde, Arizona. On the Tonto NF, the WSR is accessed from the community of Strawberry, Arizona, via FR 708.



Figure 1. Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River Vicinity Map

Background

Fossil Creek was the site of the first hydrologic power system in Arizona. In 1909, a dam that diverted the entire baseflow for hydropower generation was built across Fossil Creek. In 2005, the hydroelectric project was decommissioned and full flows were returned to Fossil Creek. A portion of the historic Fossil Creek diversion dam remains.

On March 30, 2009, Congress designated (P.L. 111-11) Fossil Creek as a 17-mile Wild and Scenic River (WSR). Figure 2 displays the WSR corridor and key existing recreation use areas. In accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Coconino and Tonto national forests are developing CRMP that will provide detailed direction, implementation actions, and monitoring to protect and enhance river values.



Fossil Creek diversion dam

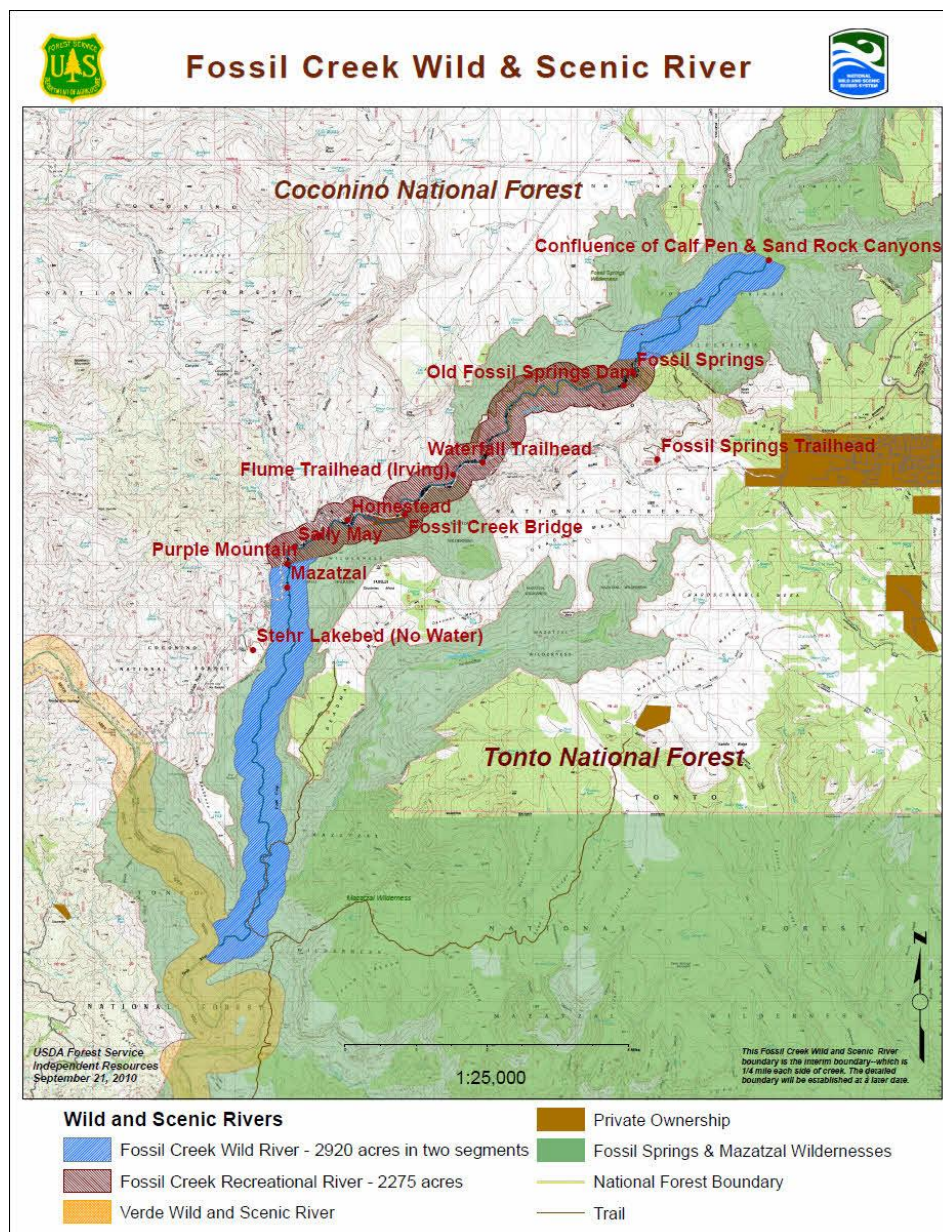


Figure 2. Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River Corridor

River values, particularly those determined to be “Outstandingly Remarkable Values” (ORVs) will guide management of the Fossil Creek WSR under the CRMP. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) requires that the river’s water quality, free-flowing condition and the outstandingly remarkable values be protected or enhanced. Fossil Creek’s ORVs have been identified as recreation, geology, biology, and Western Apache and Yavapai traditional and contemporary cultural values. More detail about the ORVs can be found in the Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River Resource Assessment, which is available online on the project website.



Collage of Fossil Creek River Values

The topology of Fossil Creek has created its river values. The creek is prized for its interrelated parts, including its length, continuous and abundant flow, elevation gradient, unfragmented nature, and presence of travertine. For these reasons, Fossil Creek provides outstanding habitat for a high diversity of fish and wildlife species and is the only pure warm water native fishery in Arizona. Fossil Creek is the only intact perennial system with continuous flow without any water diversions in Arizona and is the only uninterrupted system between the Verde River and the Mogollon Rim, spanning and connecting a number of biotic communities from upper Sonoran desert scrub through ponderosa pine forests. These natural features come together create an opportunity for river-based recreation and education that is rare in the desert Southwest.

Because Fossil Creek is at a crossroads of several regional geographic elements and floristic provinces that support a diversity of indigenous flora and fauna species, a number of species are rare enough to warrant special status by both Federal (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Southwestern Region) and state agencies like the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of the project is to prepare a CRMP for the Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River to meet the requirements of Section 3(d) (1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA; P.L. 90-542). There is a need to provide for the protection and enhancement of the river's water quality, free-flowing condition and its ORVs for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. There is a need to amend the Coconino National Forest Plan (USDA FS 1987, as amended and under revision) and the Tonto National Forest Plan (USDA FS 1985, as amended and under revision) to incorporate the CRMP to develop management direction that specifically protects and enhances river values. Currently, neither plan has sufficient guidance that would protect river values. Related to this is the need to fulfill the requirements of WSRA Section 3(b) and establish river corridor boundaries and recreation and wild segment classifications.

Since full flows were returned to Fossil Creek with the decommissioning of the dam in 2005, public use dramatically increased. For example, recreational use during the high use season (June-September) increased from an estimated 20,000 visitors in 2006 to 80,000 visitors in 2013. On the July 4th holiday weekend in 2015 (a 3-day weekend), approximately 1,000 people were in the WSR corridor per day and almost 3,000 people were turned away at the entrance barricade. Social media (YouTube, Twitter) and television and magazine articles (e.g. *Arizona Highways*) encouraged visitors to seek out this unique Arizona environment, resulting in escalated use. As a 2016 update (described in more detail below and in Alternative A), a new interim management reservation system has reduced the daily capacity to 740 visitors per day (not including administrative use), with fewer people turned away, and effectively addressing public safety and emergency access issues.



Weekend traffic at Fossil Creek prior to the 2016 interim management reservation system.

A purpose of the Fossil Creek project is to provide protection from impacts from recreational use that are threatening river values and other biological, physical and social resource values and, to the extent possible, to enhance river values. River values that need protection include water quality (river value), recreation, geology, Western Apache traditional and contemporary cultural values and biological values (the high diversity of fish and wildlife species).

The most significant visible impacts from recreation have resulted from uncontrolled dispersed camping, creation of unapproved camp sites, creation of unplanned trail systems, excessive littering and defecation near the creek. Water quality monitoring conducted during various peak visitation times has found levels of *Enterococcus faecalis* in Fossil Creek exceeding the EPA limit for full body emersion. Ongoing monitoring indicates the majority of fecal coliform levels are within EPA limits with limited exception, especially at the site below Mid-falls.



Daily abandoned trash prior to the 2016 interim management reservation system.

Currently, Fossil Creek is meeting the state water quality standard, but there is a trend toward exceeding (not meeting) the water quality standard. Annual monitoring since 2011 also indicates there are increasing impacts to upland vegetation that is habitat for wildlife species; damage to heritage sites; and unsafe conditions for visitors, Forest Service personnel and emergency responders. In order to protect river values, including tribal sacred sites and traditional uses, there is a need for both a management plan and site-specific actions that will address recreation capacity, corridor access, recreation facilities, and services and public health and safety.

Interim Management and Recent Changes

Resource impacts resulting from increased recreational use of Fossil Creek have necessitated implementation of interim measures to manage visitor use while the CRMP is under development. In 2011, interim measures resulted in improvements to signage and parking areas and activities designed to stabilize or rehabilitate areas impacted by visitor use. Monitoring of use and resource impacts following these initial measures indicated a need for additional interim management actions to protect the Wild and Scenic River values and public safety. In early 2016, interim management measures instituted vehicle capacity control measures via establishment of a seasonal parking reservation system capping daily visitor capacity at approximately 740 people between April 1 and October 1.

In September 2016, the Forest Service acquired a 19-acre parcel of private land within the Fossil Creek WSR corridor. Acquisition of this parcel, resulting in contiguous federal land, ensures management of the entire WSR corridor under the CRMP and provides additional management opportunities to be incorporated into analysis of the CRMP's management alternatives. This land is currently referred to as the Heinrich Parcel, but now that it has been acquired by the Federal Government, may be re-named.

Public Involvement Key Issues

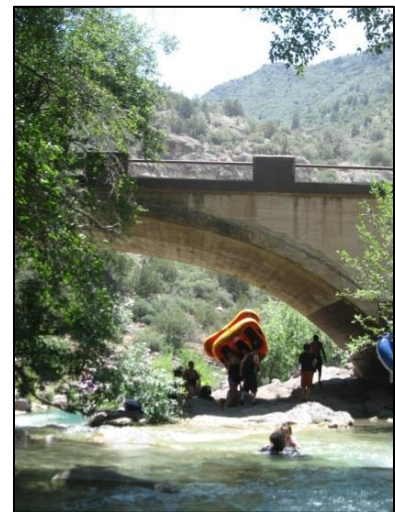
Public involvement in Fossil Creek planning was initiated in 2010 and has informed the interim management and the current preliminary alternative concepts. The alternatives, as proposed, include a “no action” alternative (Alternative A) and four action alternatives: Alternative B (Enhanced Protections), Alternative C (Non-motorized Experience), Alternative D (Motorized Use and Refugia), and Alternative E (Long-term Adaptive Management). All alternatives are described in greater detail later in this document.

Public comments have been consolidated into three key issues:

1. **Recreation Opportunities, Resource and Traditional Use Impacts:** Most commenters supported providing a full range of recreation opportunities, such as swimming, hiking, camping, biking, motorized access, and horseback riding. However, a majority of commenters stated the impacts associated with recreation use are not acceptable or sustainable, particularly to the river and fisheries resource. The Yavapai and Western Apache tribes have indicated that unmanaged recreation use impacts traditional and contemporary cultural sites and practices.



Trash left along the river impacts the health of the natural and cultural resources.



One of several popular swim sites within the 7.5-mile recreation segment of Fossil Creek.

Regarding visitor capacity, many commenters stated the Fossil Creek area is receiving too many daily visitors and recommended limiting the number of cars and people. Others did not want limitations that would reduce access to the area, specifically access to Childs Day Use Recreation Area (south on Forest

Road 502) and the community of Strawberry (east on Forest Road 708). Most commenters supported access for administrative uses, fire, emergency and search and rescue responses and access for people with disabilities.

Response: Alternative B was developed to respond to recommendations to retain a full range of opportunities, current motorized and non-motorized access, and the current distribution of recreation sites while protecting river and resource values. It was largely based on early stakeholder recommendations, including a public working group. Alternative C was developed to respond to comments that recommended a non-motorized theme where visitors explore Fossil Creek primarily by foot, by bike, or by horse. Alternative D was developed to respond to those commenters desiring a motorized experience by allowing maximum access to the corridor while promoting low use and refugia between recreation sites. Alternative E was developed to maximize recreation opportunities through adaptive management while providing protection for river and tribal values at Fossil Springs and the Waterfall site.

All action alternatives (Alternatives B-E) respond to resource impact concerns by designing facilities and trails to protect resources. All action alternatives address crowding (capacity) by setting maximum permitted limits on people at one time (PAOTs) although the capacity varies by alternative and level of development. Capacity numbers in all action alternatives may only be possible to achieve over time with infrastructure improvements and additional management capacity. All action alternatives include adaptive management actions that will adjust management over time in response to trends in resource and river value condition.

2. **Level of Recreation Development:** Several commenters were supportive of providing and improving the developed facilities, such as paved parking, trailheads, restrooms, interpretation kiosks, trash receptacles, hosts or site-stewards, helispots/helipads, picnic and shade shelters, and education programs, while others would like to see development limited and/or decreased and the area kept primitive. Several commenters wanted implementation, including phases of development, clearly identified and described.

Response: Each action alternative responds to public comments on the level of development by varying the degree of development that could be authorized while protecting river values. Alternative B retains the current distribution of recreation sites at Fossil Creek. Alternative C was developed to respond to comments that recommended a non-motorized theme where visitors would explore Fossil Creek primarily by foot, by bike, or by horse by reducing the number of developed recreation sites and close much of Forest Road 708 in the middle of the Fossil Creek corridor to public motorized traffic. Alternative D was developed to respond to those who recommended a motorized theme. This alternative allows maximum access to the Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River corridor with visitors concentrating in areas including the Fossil Creek Bridge, Irving and Homestead sites.

Actions necessary to protect river values (including parking and sanitation) are common to alternatives B-E. Other actions would be implemented as part of adaptive management. In this case, addressing the specific timing of when some actions could be implemented is not possible at this stage because it would be based on monitoring results and administrative capacity.

3. **Public Health and Safety:** Prior to the 2016 seasonal reservation system, visitors could access the WSR corridor from Highway 260 after hours and on days when Forest Service personnel were not present. The lack of management resulted in unmanaged parking and blocked roads as visitors parked haphazardly in undesignated spots along the roadway. With blocked roadways, critical personnel and visitors could be blocked from entering or exiting the corridor in the



Traffic jams and blocked roadways, prior to the 2016 interim management reservation system.

event of an emergency. Local government agencies, including Gila County, have indicated there is a need to improve public preparedness, particularly for those visitors who access the WSR corridor from the East Welcome Station near Strawberry and hike to Fossil Springs. Over time, the numbers of search and rescue operations increased as visitation has increased.

Response: All action alternatives include providing designated parking and capacity levels through the use of a reservation system. The 2016 interim reservation system has been met with success. In addition, all action alternatives include contact entry booths that provide an opportunity to hand out safety and trip preparedness materials.

Alternatives and Alternative Themes

As a result of collaboration with stakeholders, public feedback since 2010 and lessons learned through implementing interim management measures, preliminary alternative concepts have been developed for management of the Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River Corridor through a CRMP. The alternatives, as proposed, include Alternative A (No Action) and four action alternatives: Alternative B (Enhanced Protections), Alternative C (Non-motorized Experience), Alternative D (Motorized Use and Refugia), and Alternative E (Long-term Adaptive Management). These alternatives are summarized below, and table 1 provides a side-by-side comparison of the key elements of the alternatives. Figures 3 through 7 at the end of this document are maps of the recreation sites and road and trail systems proposed under each alternative. Tables showing a more detailed comparison of elements of the alternatives and a detailed description of capacity numbers and amenities by recreation site are available online on the project website.

The “no action” alternative, representing the current 2016 management under interim measures, serves as a baseline for assessing impacts of implementing the four action alternatives. The action alternatives could be modified to reflect new issues raised in comments received during this current NOI comment period. The potential environmental and socioeconomic effects of implementing the alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS.

The action alternatives represent possible management scenarios that could be reflected through the CRMP. The action alternatives vary in the amount of visitor use (capacity), the level of recreation facility development, and the types of visitor use that could be accommodated. To illustrate the framework, the amount of visitor use and level of recreation development increases across the alternatives; therefore, Alternative B provides the lowest visitor capacity and recreation development while Alternative E provides the highest visitor capacity and recreation development.

It is important to know that many actions are common to all alternatives, such as boundary and segment classifications and proposed restoration actions, to provide the foundation of the Fossil Creek CRMP. To build on this foundation, all action alternatives include site-specific actions needed to protect river and resource values.

When assisting the Forest Service with alternative specifics, it is important to note that implementation of improvements and developed infrastructure would need to occur over time. Capacity numbers and recreational facility developments depicted in these alternatives represent a “full build out” scenario and would not necessarily be implemented immediately. In fact, increases in capacity or additional facility development should be viewed as adaptive management actions that would be contingent on not degrading Fossil Creek’s ORVs, which would result in unacceptable impacts to other resources in the river corridor, and not exceeding management’s capacity to implement, fund and support management of Fossil Creek.

Analysis in the EIS of the effects of implementing the actions proposed in these alternatives will inform the Forest Service decision on the management guidance provided by the completed CRMP, and this decision could modify the selected alternative to ensure anticipated effects are within acceptable levels and ORVs are not degraded. Subsequently, as the CRMP is implemented, monitoring of recreational use and associated resource impacts and other changes in resource conditions would inform whether capacity increases and additional development allowed by the CRMP are appropriate. Conversely, if monitoring indicates degradation of ORVs or reveals unacceptable resource impacts, capacity numbers could be reduced through adaptive management.

As part of the CRMP effort, a programmatic forest plan amendment under the 2012 Planning Rule is proposed for both the Coconino and Tonto national forests to incorporate management direction for the Fossil Creek WSR corridor. The proposed amendments would add, replace, delete or revise (as needed) direction for the management of the 17-mile Wild and Scenic River corridor.

Alternative A – Current Management (No Action)

Alternative A is current management that would continue to implement the forest plan and interim protective measures as a way to protect river values and address public health and safety. A CRMP would not guide management of the Fossil Creek WSR. Visitor use would continue to be managed via a seasonal reservation system effective when vehicle capacity control is needed (approximately April 1 to Oct. 1). Parking capacity would remain at approximately 154 vehicles and 780 people at one time (PAOT), including administrative use. During the reservation season, Forest Service personnel would continue to provide visitor information and check reservations at temporary entry booths. No camping would be allowed within the permit area during the reservation system but would be allowed during the winter season within specified areas. Tribal traditional cultural activities and uses would continue to be exempt from the reservation system. Additional measures may continue to be needed to address resource or capacity management issues that arise.

Alternative B – Enhanced Protections

The CRMP in Alternative B would retain a full range of recreation opportunities, the current motorized and non-motorized access and the current distribution of recreation sites and non-motorized trails while protecting river and resource values. Additional development would be minimal. A limited amount of camping would be allowed at designated sites. The capacity in this alternative would be reduced to approximately 111 vehicles and 610 PAOT, including administrative use.

Alternative C – Non-Motorized Experience

The CRMP in Alternative C would establish a non-motorized experience where visitors explore Fossil Creek primarily by foot, by bicycle, or by horse. Some recreation sites would be closed. Some non-motorized trail system modifications would occur. No camping would be allowed within the WSR corridor, but a limited amount of camping would be allowed at a new trailhead established on the rim on the Strawberry side of the WSR corridor. The capacity in this alternative would be approximately 136 vehicles and 690 PAOT, including administrative use.

Alternative D – Motorized Experience and Refugia

The CRMP in Alternative D would provide for motorized use and refugia. This alternative allows maximum motor vehicle access to the corridor while minimizing recreation infrastructure, use of, and connectivity between designated recreation sites. Some recreation sites would be closed, and a minimal non-motorized trail system would be maintained. This alternative would include scenic drive-through permits. No camping would be allowed. Initially, capacity would reflect current management (154 vehicles and 780 PAOT). Over time and if appropriate, adaptive management would be used to increase capacity to a maximum of approximately 184 vehicles and 930 PAOT (including administrative use), with a portion of this total reflecting a scenic drive-through component, as infrastructure is built, management capacity allows, and visitor behavior promotes sustainable river value protection.

Alternative E – Long-term Adaptive Management (Proposed Action)

Alternative E is designated as the “proposed action” because it includes the most flexibility to increase capacity and recreation infrastructure in the future, if appropriate. The CRMP in this alternative would maximize recreation opportunities while providing protection for sensitive river and tribal values. Initially, capacity would reflect current management (154 vehicles and 780 PAOT). Over time and if appropriate, adaptive management would be used to increase capacity to a maximum of approximately 338 vehicles and 1,705 PAOT (including administrative use) as infrastructure is built, management capacity allows, and visitor behavior promotes sustainable river value

protection. A portion of the maximum capacity includes a motorized trail use component. A limited amount of camping would be allowed at designated sites.

Commonalities and Key Differences amongst the Alternatives

- Outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) would be protected or enhanced throughout the Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River corridor under all action alternatives.
- Monitoring and adaptive management would be used in all action alternatives to make management adjustments to assure cultural, natural resource, and recreation protection.
- Various restoration activities would occur in all action alternatives, such as closing system roads; decommissioning closed roads, routes, and social trails; restoring areas along existing roads; and restoring springs.
- Tribal traditional cultural uses would be encouraged in the WSR corridor in all alternatives. Portions of the Homestead site would be available for tribal use at any time.
- All action alternatives would manage visitor use by limiting people at one time (PAOT) in the WSR corridor. The PAOT numbers would be based on both parking capacity and useable acreage in the recreation use areas.
- A reservation and recreation fee system would be used to manage access to the WSR corridor in all action alternatives. The seasonality of the reservation system would be determined by need (reservations are currently required April 1 – Oct. 1), and access for permitted activities (such as hunting, fishing, or research) and tribal use would be maintained year-round. The reservation system would provide users with a convenient way to assure there would be a space for them at Fossil Creek ahead of time or to plan another day to visit. Recreation fees could be used for maintenance and operation of recreation facilities, restoration activities, parking and road maintenance, development of interpretive programming in the Wild and Scenic River corridor, and other Wild and Scenic River-related management activities.
- Opportunities for recreation through outfitters/guides and concessionaires would be provided. Access for outfitters/guides would be designated at certain sites (Purple Mountain and Sally May) in some alternatives in order to ensure adequate sanitation by providing portable toilet facilities. The presence of overhead powerlines restricts the Forest Service from constructing permanent toilet facilities at these locations.
- Year-round day use would be allowed in all alternatives, but locations would differ by alternative. Some alternatives maintain access to all existing recreational sites, and others close certain sites or portions of the WSR corridor for resource protection.
- The action alternatives propose a variety of improvements to existing recreational sites, ranging from improved signage, restrooms, and parking to expansion of certain sites, specifically Irving. The extent of improvements varies by alternative.
- Camping use and locations vary by alternative. Camping is prohibited in some alternatives, and allowed at certain locations in others.
- Changes to the non-motorized trail system vary by alternative, and include adding trails, removing trails or portions of trails, and renaming certain trails. Trails with proposed name changes are the Waterfall Trail (to be renamed as the Lewis Trail) and the Fossil Springs Trail (to be renamed as the Bear Trail).
- Motorized access to the Fossil Creek WSR corridor on FR 708 would be maintained, but the extent of access would vary by alternative. Motorized access on FR 502 to Childs would remain.
- Waterplay would be allowed in all action alternatives but would be prohibited at the waterfall in some alternatives due to cultural and natural resource and safety issues.
- Interpretation and environmental education would play an important role in the CRMP in all alternatives. Interpretation would be provided using various types of media, and the extent, type, and content would

vary by alternative. Emphasis would be placed on portable components and adaptability to allow for maximum flexibility of use and location; however, some permanent interpretive kiosks or facilities, including a welcome center, would be needed. In addition, some alternatives propose a central location for meeting, dining, research, and administrative activities; overnight accommodations (such as trailer hookups, platform tents, yurts, or small cabins); and overnight amenities such as showers.

- Opportunities for partnerships and volunteerism would be emphasized in all action alternatives. Environmental interpretation and education would help visitors discover and learn first-hand about the natural processes and cultural features that make Fossil Creek special, instill a land ethic, help visitors develop a connection to the natural world, teach them to be active stewards, and instill the importance of ensuring natural areas for present and future generations.
- Under all action alternatives, the Fossil Creek WSR corridor would be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry.

Table 1. Comparison of Alternatives, Fossil Creek Wild and Scenic River CRMP

	<u>Alternative A</u> Existing Condition (No Action)	<u>Alternative B</u> Enhanced Protections	<u>Alternative C</u> Non-Motorized Experience	<u>Alternative D</u> Motorized Use and Refugia	<u>Alternative E</u> Long-term Adaptive Management (Proposed Action)
Daily Parking Capacity and People At One Time (PAOT)¹	154 vehicles and 780 PAOT	111 vehicles and 610 PAOT	136 vehicles and 690 PAOT	184 vehicles and 930 PAOTS (total includes scenic driving vehicles)	338 vehicles and 1,705 PAOT (total includes motorized trail vehicles less than 62 inches wide)
Day-use Reservation and Recreation Fee System	Seasonal parking reservation system. No permit required for winter-season camping	Yes (including a possible additional camping permit system)	Yes (including a possible additional camping permit system)	Yes (including a possible additional scenic driving permit system)	Yes (including a possible additional camping and motorized trail permit system)
Recreation Sites	Open: Mazatzal, Purple Mountain, Sally May, Junction, Homestead, Fossil Creek Bridge, Tonto Bench, Irving, Waterfall, Historic Dam, Fossil Springs, and Fossil Springs Trailhead Closed: N/A	Open: Mazatzal, Purple Mountain, Sally May, Junction, Heinrich, Fossil Creek Bridge, Tonto Bench, Irving, Lewis Trail (formerly Waterfall Trail) from trailhead to waterfall, Historic Dam, Fossil Springs, and Bear Trailhead (formerly Fossil Springs Trailhead) Closed: Homestead (except for Tribal use)	Open: Cactus Flat, Junction, Homestead, Fossil Creek Bridge, Tonto Bench, Irving, Lewis Trial (formerly Waterfall Trail) from trailhead to approx. mile 0.7, and Bear Trailhead (formerly Fossil Springs Trailhead) Closed: Mazatzal, Purple Mountain, Sally May, waterfall at end of Lewis Trail (formerly Waterfall Trail), Historic Dam, and Fossil Springs	Open: Mazatzal, Junction, Homestead, Heinrich, Fossil Creek Bridge, Irving, and Rim Trailhead Closed: Purple Mountain, Sally May, Tonto Bench, Waterfall Trail, waterfall at end of Waterfall Trail, Historic Dam, and Fossil Springs	Open: Mazatzal, Purple Mountain, Sally May, Junction, Cactus Flat, Homestead, Heinrich, Fossil Creek Bridge, Tonto Bench, Irving, Lewis Trial (formerly Waterfall Trail) from trailhead to approx. mile 0.7, Historic Dam, Fossil Springs, Rim Trailhead, Bear Trailhead Closed: Waterfall at end of Lewis Trail (formerly Waterfall Trail)
Recreation Infrastructure	Minimal development with portable toilets, kiosks, signs, barriers, gates, and camping during the off season	Minimal development with limited seasonal and year round designated camping, vault toilets, kiosks, trash receptacles, kiosks, signs, interpretive trail, barriers, bike racks, gates	Moderate development with limited year round designated camping, vault and portable toilets, trash receptacles, kiosks, signs, barriers, picnic tables, benches, bike racks, gates	Moderate to high development with additional vehicle bridge to expanded recreation site, vault and portable toilets, trash receptacles, kiosks, signs, barriers, picnic tables, benches, bike	Over time, high development with additional vehicle bridge to expanded recreation site, moderate year-round designated camping, vault and portable toilets, trash receptacles, kiosks,

	<u>Alternative A</u> Existing Condition (No Action)	<u>Alternative B</u> Enhanced Protections	<u>Alternative C</u> Non-Motorized Experience	<u>Alternative D</u> Motorized Use and Refugia	<u>Alternative E</u> Long-term Adaptive Management (Proposed Action)
				racks, group picnicking area, gates, scenic driving use	signs, barriers, picnic tables, benches, bike racks, multiple group picnicking areas, gates, motorized trail use
West Welcome Station	West portable visitor contact booth at Junction FR 708 and 502 with portable toilet	West portable visitor contact booth at Junction FR 708 and 502 with vault toilet. At Heinrich would be a West welcome center with interpretive displays, interpretive trails, parking, vault toilet, trash receptacle, and a host-admin site. No river access at Heinrich	At Cactus Flat, a welcome center would have parking, including equestrian trailer spaces, vault toilet, kiosk, trash receptacle, picnic tables, bike racks, and the start of the new Creek View Trailhead	At Heinrich, a small welcome center would have parking, interpretive trail, vault toilet, kiosk, trash receptacle, picnic tables and a host-admin site	West permanent visitor contact booth at Junction FR 708 and 502 with vault toilet and temporary parking. Cactus Flat would provide parking, vault toilet, trash receptacles and the start of the new Creek View Trailhead. At Heinrich, a West welcome center would have interpretive displays, interpretive trail, parking, vault toilet, trash receptacles, and a host-admin site
Camping Use	Seasonal camping allowed in specified areas, downstream of the Fossil Creek Bridge and upstream of the historic dam	10 designated camp spots divided amongst Mazatzal, Purple Mountain, and Sally May during off-season only. Near the historic dam, allow 3 designated camping spots year round with addition of an alternative compost toilet	4 designated camping spots provided for hikers and equestrians year round at the Rim Trailhead parking lot	No designated or dispersed camping allowed within the recreation segment of the corridor	Camping allowed year-round in 10 designated areas in Homestead, and as dispersed for special service and interpretive events throughout corridor. At the historic dam, allow 3 designated camping spots year round, with one of the three to be for outfitter and guides, with addition of an alternative toilet

	<u>Alternative A</u> Existing Condition (No Action)	<u>Alternative B</u> Enhanced Protections	<u>Alternative C</u> Non-Motorized Experience	<u>Alternative D</u> Motorized Use and Refugia	<u>Alternative E</u> Long-term Adaptive Management (Proposed Action)
Access to Lewis Trail (formerly Waterfall Trail) and waterfall	Waterplay allowed along Waterfall Trail and at the waterfall	Waterplay allowed along Lewis Trail and at the waterfall	Waterplay at waterfall at end of the Lewis Trail to be prohibited, after hardened access points are added up to 0.7 miles up the trail. Waterfall overlook/viewpoint provided	Trail is closed and rehabilitated. No access to waterfall	Waterplay at waterfall at end of the Lewis Trail to be prohibited, after hardened access points are added up to 0.7 miles up the trail. Possible interpretive or outfitter/guide hiking experiences along trail. Waterfall overlook/viewpoint provided
Fossil Springs Access	Yes – Day-use hikers; winter camping allowed upstream of historic dam	Yes – Day-use hikers and three designated backcountry camp sites through a permit	No access	No access	Yes – Day-use hikers and three designated backcountry camp sites through a permit, a portion of which could go to outfitter and guides
Outfitter and Guide (O/G) Capacity (PAOT - factored at 8 people per vehicle)	Not applicable	Purple Mtn. O/G: 5 vehicles or 40 PAOT Sally May O/G: 10 vehicles or 80 PAOT	Not applicable	Not applicable	Purple Mountain O/G.: 10 vehicles or 80 PAOT Sally May O/G: 15 vehicles or 120 PAOT
Non-motorized trails: existing and proposed	17 miles Existing: Flume Trail, Waterfall Trail, Fossil Springs Trail, and Mail Trail	18 miles Existing Trails: Flume Trail, Lewis Trail (formerly Waterfall Trail), Bear Trail (formerly Fossil Springs Trail), and Mail Trail. Proposed Trails: Interpretive trail at the West Welcome Station at Heinrich	17 miles Existing Trails: Flume Trail, Lewis Trail (formerly Waterfall Trail), Bear Trail (formerly a portion of Fossil Springs Trail) and Mail Trail. Proposed Trails: Creek View Trail and Rim Trail	13 miles Existing Trails: Flume Trail and Mail Trail Proposed Trail: Rim Trail	17 miles Existing Trails: Flume, Lewis Trail (formerly Waterfall Trail), Bear Trail (formerly Fossil Springs), and Mail Trail Proposed Trails: Creek View Trail, Rim Trail and interpretive trails at the West Welcome Station at Heinrich

	<u>Alternative A</u> Existing Condition (No Action)	<u>Alternative B</u> Enhanced Protections	<u>Alternative C</u> Non-Motorized Experience	<u>Alternative D</u> Motorized Use and Refugia	<u>Alternative E</u> Long-term Adaptive Management (Proposed Action)
Motorized trail (for vehicles 62 inches and less in width)	0 miles	0 miles	0 miles	0 miles	4 miles (portion of FR 708)
WSR Corridor Restoration (acres)	0 acres	Approximately 15 acres	Approximately 15 acres	Approximately 15 acres	Approximately 15 acres

¹ People at One Time (PAOT) is calculated at 5 people per vehicle unless noted otherwise. Exceptions include outfitter and guide capacity that is calculated at 8 people per vehicle or motorized trail vehicle that is calculated at 2 people per vehicle. PAOT totals include an estimated 30 PAOT for administrative use, including, permit administration staff, volunteers, researchers, law enforcement, and search and rescue. In alternatives with increases in capacity (alternatives D and E), capacity would initially reflect current management (154 vehicles and 780 PAOT). Over time and if appropriate, adaptive management would be used to increase capacity to the numbers listed as infrastructure is built, management capacity allows, and visitor behavior promotes sustainable river value protection.

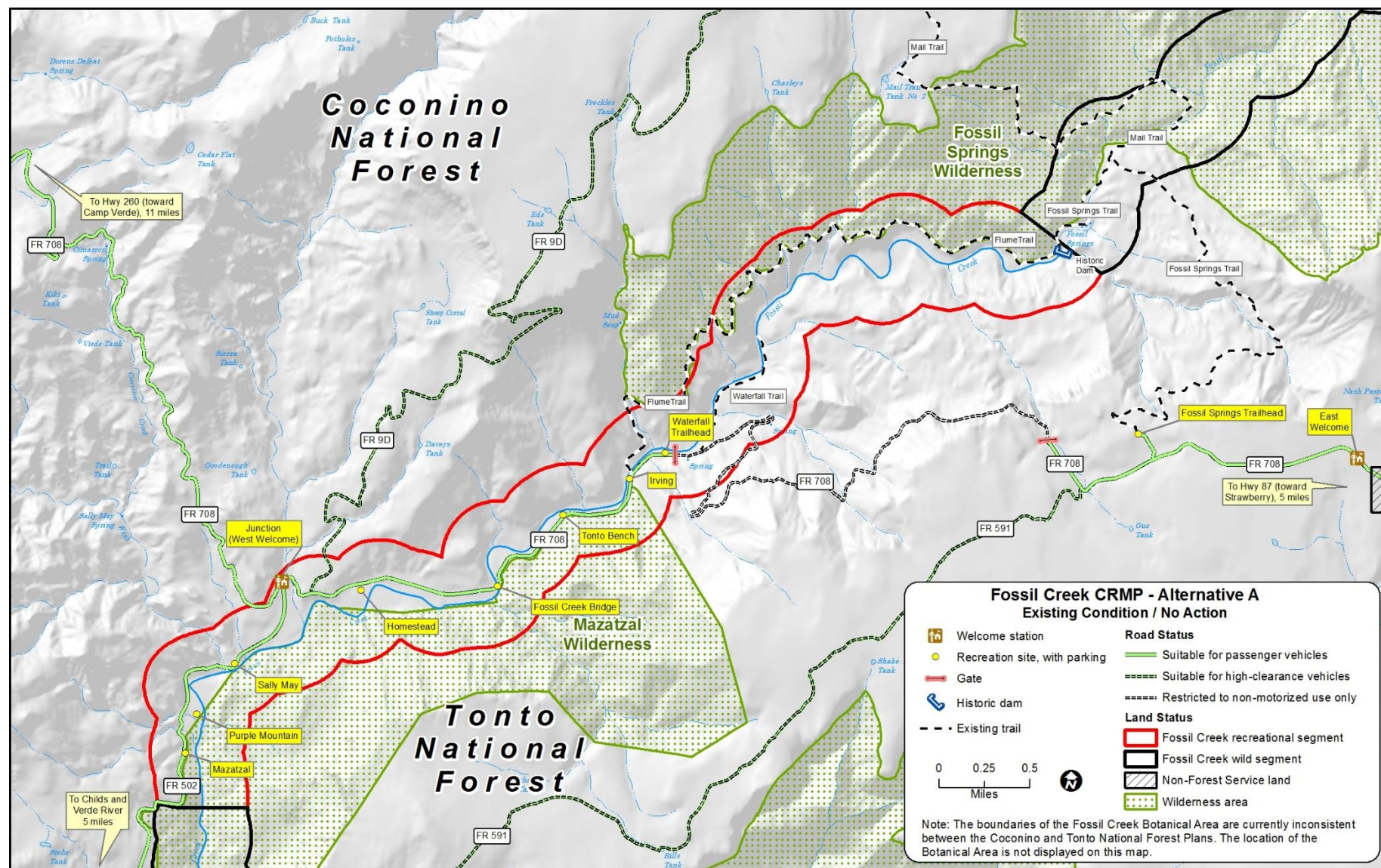


Figure 3. Map of Alternative A (existing condition / no action)

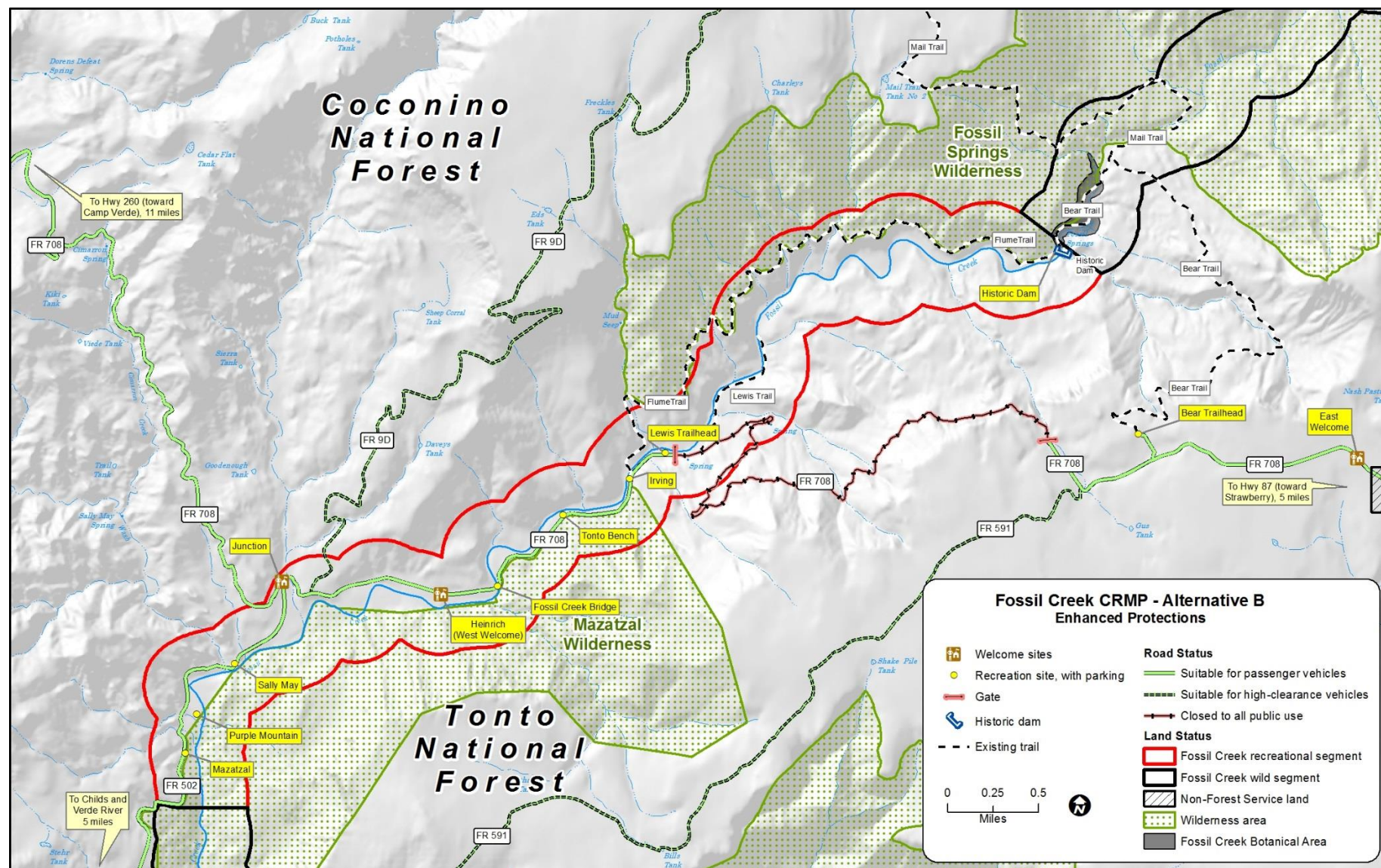


Figure 4. Map of Alternative B (enhanced protection)

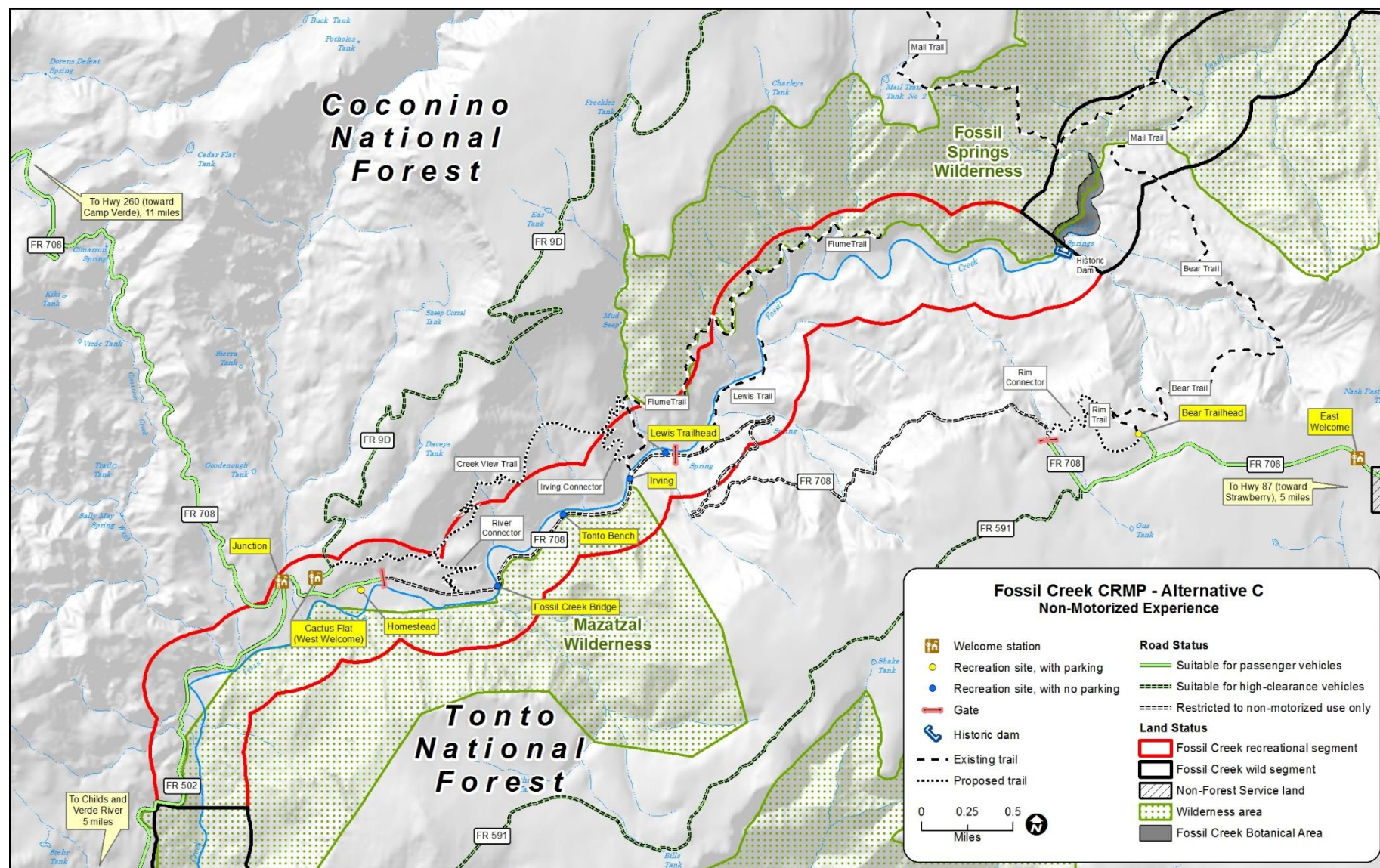


Figure 5. Map of Alternative C (non-motorized experience)

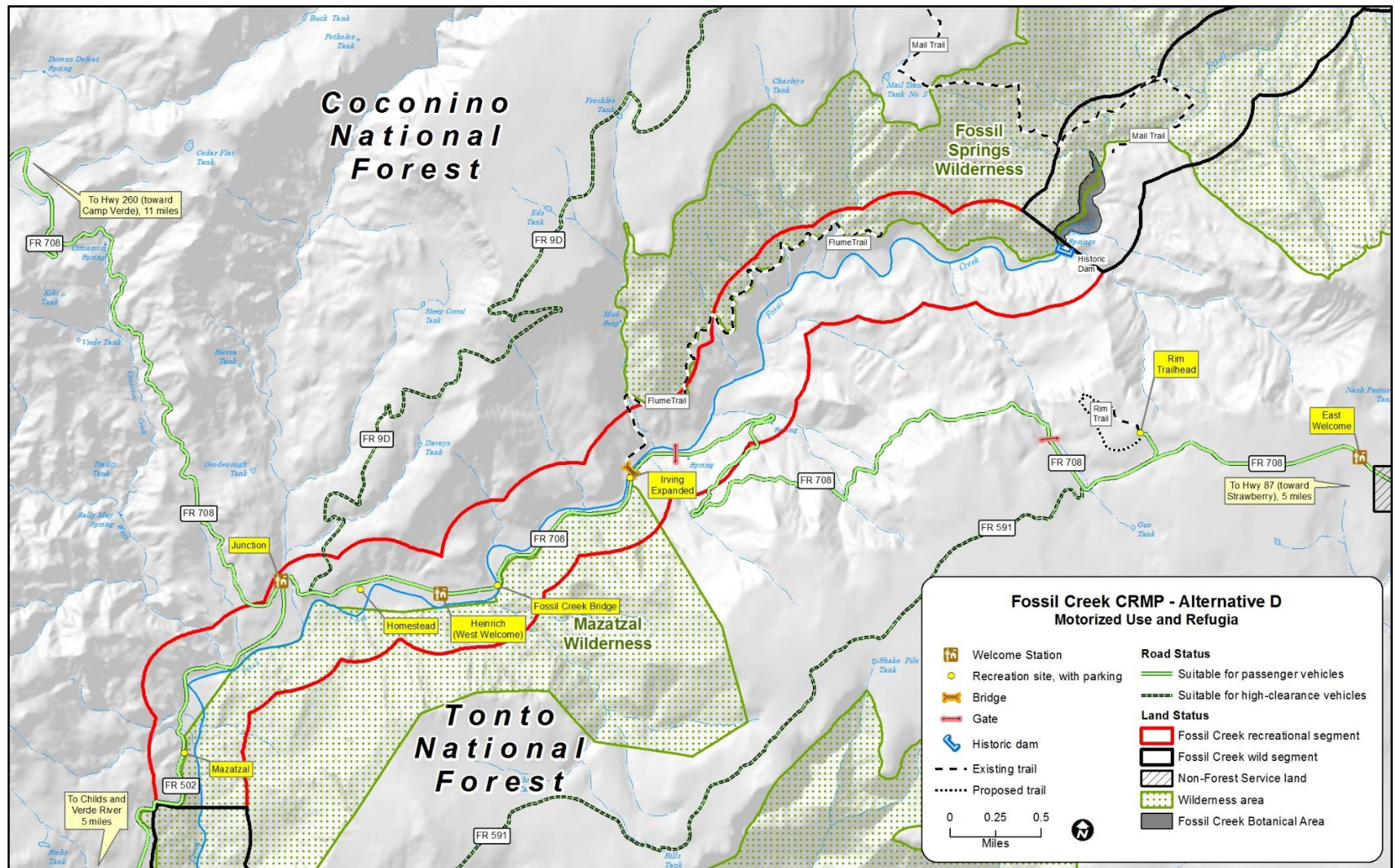


Figure 6. Map of Alternative D (motorized use and refugia)

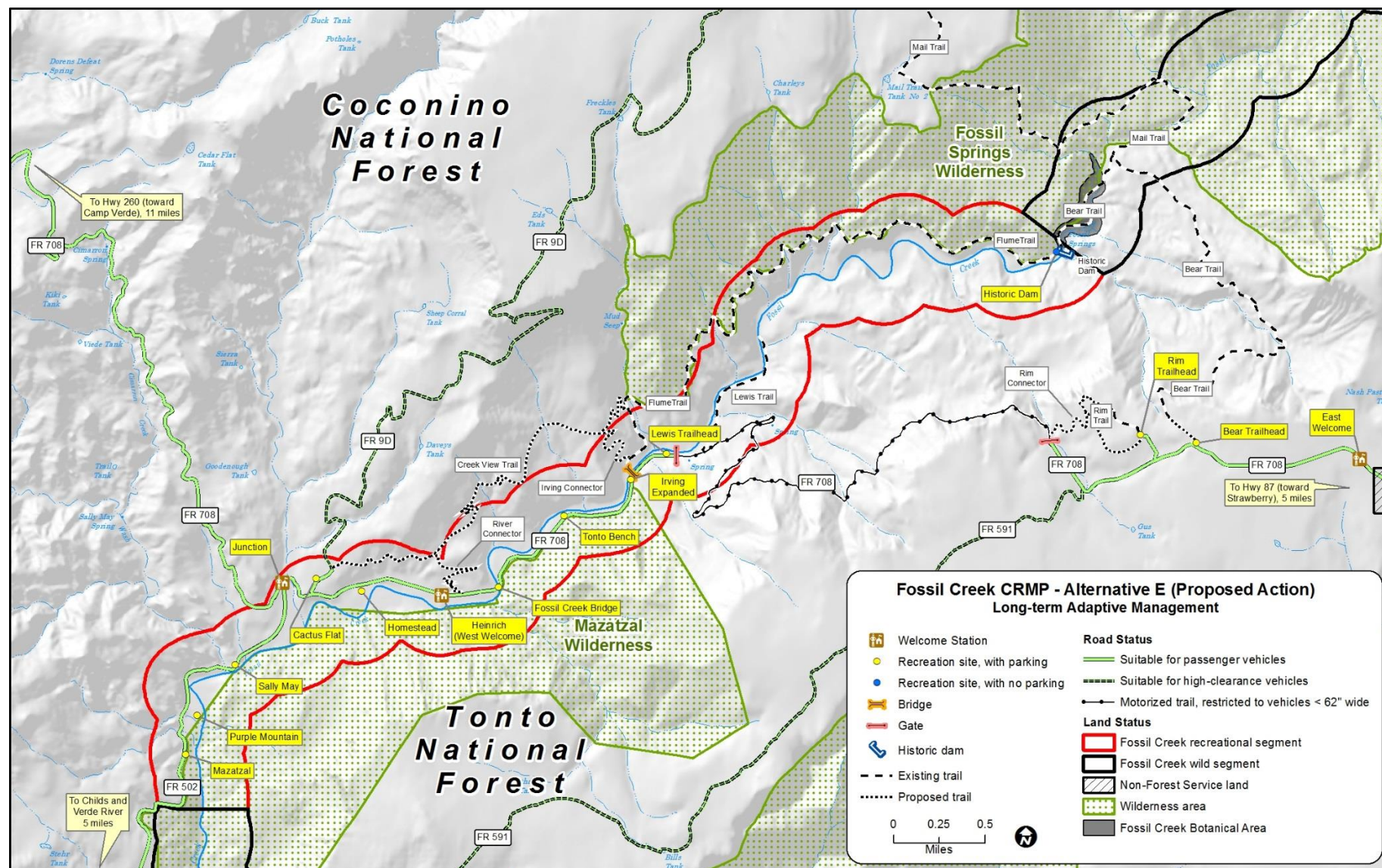


Figure 7. Map of Alternative E (proposed action; long-term adaptive management)